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## DOH-PINELLAS OFFERS TIPS TO ENJOY A SAFE AND HAPPY LABOR DAY WEEKEND

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**St. Petersburg, FL**—As summer comes to an end, many celebrate Labor Day weekend with picnics, barbeques, fireworks displays, outdoor adventures—you name it. Between the countless beautiful parks and beaches in Pinellas, we have quite the variety of options to choose from to celebrate our time off from work or school (all Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County locations will be closed, Monday, Sept. 4). Whatever you and your family choose to do for the holiday, the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) wants to make sure you choose safety this Labor Day weekend.

Planning on cooking outdoors? Plan on following these [grilling and food safety guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture](#) to prevent a foodborne illness:

- Keep everything clean by ensuring there are plenty of clean utensils and platters and make sure to have access to a source of clean water.
- Separate raw and cooked foods and never use the same platter, cutting board or utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Cook all meats to a safe minimum temperature.
- Use safe smoking practices if choosing to add a natural smoke flavoring and always use a food thermometer to be sure food has reached a safe temperature.
- Keep cold food cold and hot food hot.
- Refrigerate any leftovers (you'll be hungry later) and discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90°F).
- Always practice fire safety when using outdoor recreational grills or firepits and make sure children and pets are kept at a safe distance.

Maybe you are looking to brighten up the celebration with fireworks? Keep in mind there is a ban on the retail sale, purchase or use of fireworks that project into the air or explode. Just a reminder that sparklers and fountains are legal, but can be very dangerous if not supervised and basic safety recommendations are not followed. [Follow these tips from Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services and Fire Administration:](#)

- Read and understand all product warnings.
- Never place any body part directly over a device when lighting the fuse.
- Use sparklers only as intended outdoors.
- Always keep a bucket of water or garden hose handy in case of fire.
- After using devices, douse them with plenty of water.

If you plan on packing your totes full of sunscreen and portable speakers, and heading to your favorite beach, plan to visit [www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com) for our beach water quality reports.

The Florida Department of Health's [Healthy Beaches Program](#) monitors beach water quality for your safety. Beach coordinators collect biweekly water samples throughout the year. The samples are analyzed for bacteria, such as enterococci—organisms that are present in animal waste. In high concentrations, enterococci may indicate that there are other hazardous organisms in the water that could cause disease, infections and rashes.

DOH-Pinellas tests beaches at numerous sites along the Gulf Coast every other week. Results are posted on the [website](#). The website also provides links to reports from beaches in other counties throughout Florida. At this time, there are no Pinellas beaches that require an advisory.

Lastly, have fun! Labor Day weekend can be an enjoyable and relaxing way for you, your family and friends to say goodbye to summer. By following these simple precautions, you can ensure your loved ones enjoy a safe and happy Labor Day weekend to remember forever, and for all the right reasons.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to [www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com) or follow us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](#).

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### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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